

Message Text

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ACTION OPR-02

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R 151008Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8787

UNCLAS MOSCOW 7218

EUR/EX FOR JOAN CLARK

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AREC, UR, AFSP
SUBJ: SOURCE OF COMMISSARY SUPPLIES

REF: 6 FAM 541.1E

1. EMBASSY HAS IN PAST YEARS PURCHASED COMMISSARY MERCHANDISE AND SUPPLIES THROUGH BERLIN COMMISSARY. THOUGH LEAD TIME ON ORDERS WAS CONSIDERABLE, ARRANGEMENT WAS REGARDED AS SATISFACTORY, OR AT LEAST AS BEST OF SERIES OF DIFFICULT ALTERNATIVES.

2. COMMISSARY BERLIN HAS NOW INFORMED EMBASSY THAT BEGINNING IMMEDIATELY IT MUST HAVE ORDER, AND PAYMENT FOR ORDER, FIVE MONTHS IN ADVANCE OF DELIVERY. THIS ARRANGEMENT WILL MEAN THAT FOR EACH ORDER \$50,000 OF EMBASSY ASSOCIATION'S ALREADY SCANT CAPITAL WILL BE TIED UP FOR MANY MONTHS BEFORE ANY SUBSTANTIAL RETURN BEGINS TO BE REALIZED ON THE ORDERS. IN ADDITION, IF EMBASSY MUST WAIT UNTIL NOVEMBER OR LATER UNTIL NEXT ORDER IS RECEIVED IN MOSCOW, AS WILL NECESSARILY BE THE CASE UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM, OUR COMMISSARY STOCKS WILL BE COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED MONTHS BEFORE THE NEW ORDER ARRIVES.

3. I THEREFORE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, SOME ALTERNATE SOURCE OF SUPPLY WHICH CAN REPLENISH OUR STOCKS WITH AS SHORT A LEAD TIME AS POSSIBLE; WHICH WOULD NOT INVOLVE GREATLY INCREASED TRANSPORTATION COSTS; AND WHICH PERHAPS WOULD CONSIDER PAYMENT UPON RECEIPT OF THE ORDER IN MOSCOW RATHER THAN WHEN THE ORDER IS PLACED.

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WOULD, E.G., DIRECT SHIPMENTS FROM CAMERON STATION IN ALEXANDRIA

BE FEASIBLE? (FYI: BERLIN COMMISSARY BEGAN DEMANDING ADVANCE PAYMENT LATE LAST YEAR AFTER EMBASSY COMMISSARY WAS LATE IN PAYING FOR AN ORDER RECEIVED.)

4. EMBASSY COMMISSARY'S NEW MANAGEMENT HAS BEEN PUTTING COMMISSARY'S FINANCIAL HOUSE BACK IN ORDER IN PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, AND COMMISSARY BOARD IS NOW PLANNING TO INSTITUTE FURTHER MEASURES, SUCH AS DEPOSITS AND/OR A CASH (I.E., SCRIPT)-AND-CARRY SYSTEM, WHICH WILL RESULT IN FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMISSARY'S FINANCIAL STATUS. THE COMMISSARY BOARD IS AT PRESENT CONSIDERING FURTHER MEASURES AS WELL, INCLUDING REQUESTING A SHORT-TERM LOAN FROM THE CENTRAL COMMISSARY, MESS AND RECREATION FUND. THE BOARD WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING INFORMATION ON WHAT IT MUST DO TO QUALIFY FOR SUCH A LOAN.

5. I WILL APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S FULLEST ASSISTANCE ON THIS. THE EMBASSY COMMUNITY IS UNDERTAKING ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT THE COMMISSARY CONTINUES TO OPERATE SATISFACTORILY, AND LOOKS FORWARD TO RECEIVING WHATEVER GUIDANCE AND ASSISTANCE THE DEPARTMENT'S SPECIALISTS ON THIS SUBJECT CAN PROVIDE.

STOESSEL

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